

BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2005

A special meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, October 3, 2005, in the Mt. Hope High School Cafeteria, 199 Chestnut Street, Bristol, RI. Marjorie J. McBride, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:07 p.m.

Present: Marjorie J. McBride, William A. Estrella, Jr., William M. O'Dell, Thomas E. Skuba, Paul E. Brule, Joyce M. Kinsella, John P. Saviano, Paul Silva and Beverly Z. Travers; and Edward P. Mara, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Absent: none

All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:10 PM

In accordance with Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)-(9), 2(b), Mr. Estrella motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:10 PM to discuss potential litigation, legal advice and property contracts. Mr. O'Dell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

RESUMPTION OF MEETING – 6:32 PM

Discussed in Executive Session were potential litigation, legal advice and property contracts.

BOND REFERENDUM UPDATE

Mrs. McBride and Dr. Mara, on the advice of Sandra Mack, the District's bond counsel, recommended that the awarding of the construction contract for the Hugh Cole Project be held until the electors determine, on December 13th, whether a new elementary school shall be built; if a new school does not pass, the District will have to revisit its plan for housing all 1100 elementary students. (See attached)

School Committee Comments:

Thomas Skuba: Following the advice of Sandra Mack makes good legal sense; it's important to realize that if the voters do not approve the new school, we will have serious space issues; a new school will provide a host of cost savings in maintenance, heating and fewer buildings.

Paul Silva: Agreed with Mr. Skuba and suggested support of the

opinion of bond counsel; baffled this is not in the hands of the Building Committee.

Marjorie McBride: Agreed with Mr. Silva and Mr. Skuba.

William O'Dell: Commended Mrs. Mack and her expertise, felt the last paragraph should be worded: "Depending of the outcome of the referendum, the District may have to revisit its plan . . ."

William Estrella: Expressed great respect for Mrs. McBride, Dr. Mara and Mrs. Mack, however, he cannot support this action; the facilities issues have been revisited many different times; concerned that if the vote does not pass, the Hugh Cole project is "out the window;" something is better than nothing; to not continue with a project already approved is not appropriate and does not make good sense for the people he represents.

Beverly Travers: Supports the advice of bond counsel; legal parameters for this amount of money need to be left to the experts.

Joyce Kinsella: This is a very complicated issue; a great deal could be lost in dealing with tax laws, state laws and bond laws; bond counsel is the expert.

John Saviano: Warren had nothing to do with the problem Bristol is facing; Warren and Hugh Cole are being held hostage; concerned that

the cost and expected unavailability of materials due to the hurricanes will put the Hugh Cole project over the timeline and over budget if it is postponed; why should the problems with the Bristol Town Council bear on the rest of the bond project.

Paul Brule: The contract has room to expand; this is a Bristol problem and it is wrong to use Hugh Cole as a hostage; he would support postponement only if all projects are postponed.

MOTION: Mr. O'Dell motioned to accept the recommendation of the School Committee Chair and the Superintendent to award the contract for Hugh Cole construction after the electors have determined whether a new elementary school shall be built. Ms. Travers seconded. On a show of hands the motion passed by a vote of 6 to 3 with Mr. Estrella, Mr. Saviano and Mr. Brule voting no.

The cost of the election is an administrative cost to the District—no Joint Finance Committee action is necessary.

Sandra Mack asked the Committee's permission to periodically inform the Joint Finance Committee and the Town Councils in writing where we are with legal issues; the Committee approved. Mrs. Mack advised that before an election can be held, confirmation of control of the Naomi Street site and non-availability of the armory must be secured. Legislators are working on decommissioning the armory; for homeland security reasons, the site must be non-military for a period

of time before you can place children there—it will not be available for a few years and is therefore a non-issue. Mrs. Mack is also reviewing the documents and reports done on the Naomi Street site by the Mt. Vernon Group for the first bond to identify any major issues before December 13th. She is scheduled to meet with the Bristol and Warren Town Councils, who will not take a stand for or against, but will merely forward the referendum question to their Boards of Canvassers.

Dr. Mara said the Building Committee took action at their last meeting to extend the Hugh Cole bid contract. Dennis Gregson confirmed the bid contract was extended to two weeks after December 13th.

Mrs. McBride said the Hugh Cole Project Manager need not be working while the project is in abeyance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Estrella, seconded by Mr. O'Dell, moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 PM. The motion passed unanimously. (Mrs. McBride chose not to vote.)

Respectfully submitted,

William M. O'Dell, Secretary

/ca